WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming system including a server and client computers connected to a network, one or a plurality of image forming devices connected to either the network or the server, and devices of which one or a plurality can be connected to the server and which can be recognized by the server, said system comprising:

input means for inputting to the server a job to be printed by an image forming device;

rendering means for rendering the job input by said input means into an image;

output means for outputting an image rendered by said rendering means to an image forming device specified by the job;

setting means for setting the specified image forming device as an output destination at the server;

output destination information holding means for holding a number of image forming devices set as output destinations by said setting means;

recognizing means for recognizing a presence of devices connected to the server, and a number thereof connected; and

comparison means for comparing a number N of the devices connected to the server that have been recognized by

said recognizing means, and a number M of image forming devices already set as output destinations by said holding means, when the specified image forming device is set as an output destination by said setting means.

2. An image forming system according to Claim 1, wherein, in an event that said comparison means judges M to be less than N, setting of the specified image forming device as the output destination is permitted, and the number of image forming devices set as output destinations held by said holding means is updated, and, in an event that said comparison means judges N and M to be equal, setting of the specified image forming device as the output destination is not permitted.

3. An image forming system including a server and client computers connected to a network, one or a plurality of image forming devices connected to either the network or the server, and devices of which one or a plurality can be connected to the server and which can be recognized by the server, said system comprising:

input means for inputting to said the server a job to be printed by an image forming device;

rendering means for rendering the job inputted by said input means into an image;

output means for outputting an image rendered by said rendering means to an image forming device specified by the job;

setting means for setting the specified image forming device as an output destination at the server;

output destination information holding means for holding a number of image forming devices set as output destinations by said setting means; and

recognizing means for recognizing a presence of devices connected to the server and a number thereof connected,

wherein the server constantly or periodically recognizes the number of devices connected to the server using said recognizing means, and compares a number n of recognized devices with a number m of image forming devices set as output destinations held in said output destination information holding means, and, in an event that n is judged to be less than m, a number of image forming devices for distributing and outputting jobs is restricted to at most the number n of recognized devices, or no jobs are output.

4. A device which can be recognized by a server connected to a network, for controlling use of software by devices connected to the network, said device comprising:

communicating means for communicating data with the

server; and

storing means for storing data used by the server to permit use of the software.

5. An image processing device for outputting image data to a plurality of image forming devices, said image processing device comprising:

input means for inputting an image forming job, wherein one of the plurality of image forming devices is specified as an output destination;

image processing means for generating image data for the specified image forming device based on the image forming job;

image output means for outputting image data generated by said image processing means to the specified image forming device;

connecting means for connecting to one or a plurality of devices; and

control means for restricting a number of image forming devices capable of receiving image data outputted from said image output means, of the plurality of image forming devices, based on a number of devices connected to said connecting means.

6. An image processing device according to Claim 5,

wherein, in an event that the number of devices connected to said connecting means is less than a number of the plurality of image forming devices, said control means selects a number of image forming devices corresponding to a difference in these numbers, and forbids image data outputted from said image output means from going to the selected image forming devices.

7. An image processing device according to Claim 5, wherein in an event that sending image data from said image output means to an image forming device is forbidden, said control means notifies an originator of the image forming job to that effect.

8. An image processing device according to Claim 5, wherein the image forming job includes PDL data inputted from computer devices via networks.

9. An image processing device according to Claim 5, wherein the image forming job includes image data read by scanners.

10. An image processing device according to Claim 5, further comprising obtaining means for obtaining data indicating a type of image forming device set for each

device connected to said connecting means, wherein said control means counts a number of devices per type of image forming device, and restricts by type of image forming device a number of image forming devices capable of producing an output for said image output means.

11. An image processing device according to Claim 10, wherein, in an event that the specified image forming device is a predetermined type, said control means does not restrict the number of image forming devices capable of producing an output for said image output means.

12. An image processing method for outputting image data to a plurality of image forming devices, said method comprising:

an input step of inputting an image forming job, wherein one of the plurality of image forming devices is specified as an output destination;

an image processing step of generating image data corresponding to the specified image forming device based on the image forming job;

an image output step of outputting image data generated in said image processing step to the specified image forming device;

an identifying step of identifying one or a plurality

of devices connected to a predetermined interface; and

a control step of restricting a number of image forming devices capable of outputting in said image output step, of the plurality of image forming devices, based on a number of devices connected.

13. An image processing method according to Claim 12, wherein, in an event that the number of devices connected is less than a number of said plurality of image forming devices, said control step selects a number of image forming devices corresponding to a difference in those numbers from the plurality of image forming devices, and forbids image data outputted in said image output step from going to the selected image forming devices.

14. An image processing method according to Claim 12, wherein in an event that sending image data outputted in said image output step to the specified image forming device is forbidden, said control step notifies an originator of the image forming job to that effect.

15. An image processing method according to Claim 12, wherein the image forming job includes PDL data inputted from computer devices via networks.

16. An image processing method according to Claim 12, wherein the image forming job includes image data read by scanners.

17. An image processing method according to Claim 12, further comprising an obtaining step for obtaining data indicating a type of image forming device set for each connected device identified in said identifying step, wherein said control step counts a number of devices per type of image forming device, and restricts by type of image forming device a number of image forming devices capable of producing an output in said image output step.

18. An image processing method according to Claim 17, wherein, in an event that the specified image forming device is a predetermined type, said control step does not restrict the number of image forming devices capable of producing an output in said image output step.

19. A computer program executed by a computer of an image processing device for implementing a method of outputting image data to a plurality of image forming devices, said computer program comprising:

code of an input step of inputting an image forming job, wherein one of the plurality of image forming devices

is specified as an output destination;

code of an image processing step of generating image data corresponding to the specified image forming device based on the image forming job;

code of an image output step of outputting image data generated in the image processing step to the specified image forming device;

code of an identifying step of identifying one or a plurality of devices connected to a predetermined interface; and

code of a control step for restricting a number of image forming devices capable of receiving image data outputted in said image output step, of the plurality of image forming devices, based on a number of devices connected.

20. A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer program according to Claim 19.